

defendants in the suit.

Pechner-James and Fernandez are each asking for \$15.15 million from the city. Both want \$5 million for hostile work environment and sexual harassment; \$150,000 in lost wages for constructive discharge; \$1.5 million in future wages and benefits; \$6 million for disparate treatment; and \$2.5 million for infliction of emotional distress.

"If they [the city] wants to settle, we are still wanting to settle," Dasent said of his clients.

According to the complaint, the women were subjected to a "punishment program of excessive walking assignments and denial of opportunity to work, ride with, and learn from experienced professionals," sexual harassment, and in the case of Fernandez, racial discrimination. The women were hired before the department adopted a state charter against sexual harassment, or a maternity leave policy, and before female officers had their own bathroom, the complaint states.

Captain Dennis Collyer said the department had sexual harassment and maternity leave policies in place before any grievances were made by female officers. Department employees received copies of the state's sexual harassment policy and underwent sensitivity training for the first time in 1996 and again in 1999, he said. Collyer also said he was the first officer to request parental leave in 1994, a year after the Family and Medical Leave Act went into effect. For the last five years females have had their own bathroom and locker room, Collyer said.

Other allegations stated in the complaint are:

- * Lieutenant Salvatore Santoro made disparaging comments about the bodies of female officers in the department. On several occasions, the plaintiffs and other female officers complained to Santoro about the sexually offensive remarks made by other male officers, "but he did not take the complaint seriously and took no remedial action. His behavior contributed to the hostile work environment that the plaintiff experienced."

- * Lieutenant Steven Ford routinely made comments about Fernandez's physical appearance, hair, and weight.

- Female officers in 1999 requested a departmental meeting. Two captains produced a report of the meeting, and recommendations followed the report, but the department took no action.

- In 2001, a pair of women's underwear hung from the bulletin board of the guard room at the department. No one, including the ranking officers in charge, removed it for several days. "This incident was consistent with the culture of degradation, humiliation, and hostility that the plaintiffs and other females experience ..."

Fernandez and Pechner-James filed separate complaints with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination in 2001. But the pending lawsuit makes those complaints redundant, and the officers plan to withdraw them this month, said Dasent.

In 2001, both officers met with Ambrosino to request a leave of absence with pay; he granted them leaves without pay.

Fernandez - who is on sick leave for an unrelated injury - is being treated for posttraumatic stress disorder and receives counseling in Chelsea, her lawyer said.

Pechner-James's last day at the department was in March 2001. Last year, Reardon filed an early retirement application on behalf of Pechner-James. The local retirement board denied the request in October 2002, but an administrative law magistrate reversed the ruling in March after her lawyer filed a separate lawsuit. And in July, a medical panel for the state's public employee retirement commission unanimously adjudicated that she was emotionally disabled by